

THE BALLAD YEARS

Welcome to 'The Ballad Years' a comprehensive encyclopaedia of British popular music performers, spanning the period from the war years to the early sixties. I hope you will find it interesting and informative.

The project began in 1989, just after I'd bought a copy of the newly published Penguin Encyclopaedia of Popular Music, only to be disappointed at how many of my favourite artists were not there. (the later Guinness 'Who's Who of' series was better, but still left a lot of gaps) I realised the book I wanted didn't exist, so decided to write it myself. Little did I know then the number of hours I would spend reading old music papers, thumb through reference books, hunt down record lists, etc. etc.

As with any work of this nature, the problem is "what do you put in and what do you leave out?", I had always been aware that the finished product would be quite big and consequently it would be easier to issue it in sections. With this in mind I rejected very little, thereby including many of the lesser known artists of the period. The size of an entry doesn't necessarily reflect that person's popularity, or my interest, just the amount of source material available. Under the umbrella of British performers I have included those artists (usually from the Commonwealth) who made their professional name in this country.

Much of my 'knowledge' has been refreshed by re-reading old copies of Melody Maker, Record Mirror, Disc, Musical Express and the like. Long time Melody Maker reporter Chris Hayes, then in his eighties and a good friend, but now sadly passed on, was very supportive and I also drew on numerous reference works when compiling my record listings. The late Colin Morgan, at the time editor of 'In Tune International', had many a sleepless night endeavouring to correct my appalling spelling, grammar and punctuation while looking out for obvious mistakes. With his wife Sheila, Colin also took on the Herculean task of producing the original twelve part-work booklets, that without their enormous help would never have seen the light of day.

I have tried to be as accurate as possible on facts and dates, but apologise for any errors that may have crept in. Only single recordings are listed, the date given being the release date and may vary a month either way.

The original 12 books were finally completed around 1998 but are now 'sold out' although an updated version is usually available (in Microsoft Word) on disc.

Good reading.

Don

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super-Mare